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MILTON AND THE SUFFOLK RESOLVES

By

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MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Milton and the Suffolk Resolves

PART I

ON Saint Valentine's day following the Armistice,* President Wilson, at a plenary session of the Peace Conference in Paris, presented to the world the Covenant of the League of Nations. That night he left Paris for a hurried visit to Washington, bringing with him a copy of the Covenant, which, however, had been cabled at once to America. In the Senate it was received with some unfavorable mutterings; so the President, before reaching America, requested that there be no discussion of the Covenant until after his return and explanation; saying, in effect, that there were good reasons even for the "verbiage" of the document.

His explanation to the Senatorial Committee in the ensuing conference at the White House was not satisfactory to all of them. Two—Senators Lodge and Knox—promptly addressed the Senate in opposition to the Covenant before the President left Washington on his second trip to Paris,—Senator Lodge speaking on February 28th and Senator Knox on March 1st. Both of them, in discussing the Covenant, went back to the early days of our history, and claimed that the provisions of the League were contrary to the fundamental and traditional principles and policies of our government as advocated by Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, and others of the fathers of our Republic.

On his way back to Paris, on March 6, 1919, President Wilson made a good-bye address at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. There he notified his League opponents of the extent to which he would go

* February 14, 1919.

in his effort to break down or circumvent the opposition in the Senate to his Covenant, saying: "When that treaty comes back, gentlemen on this side will find the Covenant not only in it, but so many threads of the treaty tied to the Covenant that you cannot dissect the Covenant from the treaty without destroying the whole vital structure."

However, the President desired to prevail, not merely by threat, but by winning adherents to his League; and in this desire he combatted the plea of the opposition that the League was contrary to the principles and policies of Washington and other founders of our republic. As a step, and a most important one, in this effort, the President, in this address of March 6th, said:

"It (the United States) was set up for the benefit of *mankind*."

Later, in the same address, he said:

"Take an individual American and you may often find him selfish, and confined to his special interests; but take the American in the mass and he is willing to die for an idea. The sweet revenge, therefore, is this, that we believed in righteousness, and now we are ready to make the supreme sacrifice for it, *the supreme sacrifice of throwing in our fortunes with the fortunes of men everywhere.*"

In his war message of April 2, 1917, he had said:

"A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a *partnership* of democratic nations. . . . Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end and *prefer the interests of mankind* to any narrow interest of their own."

In Paris, in his initiation address as a newly-made member of the Institute of France, he said, speaking of the birth of our nation:

"We came into the world consecrated to liberty, and whenever we see the cause of liberty imperiled, we are

ready to cast in our lot in common with the lot of those whose liberty is threatened."

In short, throughout his advocacy of the League of Nations, patriotism was ignored or disparaged, and internationalism was advocated; and to strengthen this advocacy, it was represented that the object of our revolutionary struggle was the benefit of mankind at large, and not simply the benefit of the colonists and the future inhabitants of our country.

Thus was a grave historical question of the highest importance thrust into the forefront of the struggle over the League of Nations.

Citizens were urged to examine and study for themselves the matter of the League of Nations as the most important subject ever presented in the history of the country. Some of us tried to do so; and early in the study met this question as to whether our forefathers fought for and established this government simply for themselves and their posterity, or for the benefit of mankind at large.

In the course of my preliminary reading I happened across the statement that Washington was commissioned as General expressly to defend "American liberty"; and the writer suggested the desirability, in studying our history, of going directly back to the original records, particularly to the "Journals of the Continental Congress" of 1774-1775, as furnishing "the genetic record" of our country. Resorting to this source, it was found most interesting.

Looking up at once the matter of Washington's commission as General and Commander-in-chief, the record showed that on the day the Battle of Bunker Hill was being fought,—June 17, 1775,—the delegates to the Continental Congress, sitting in Philadelphia, were debating and settling the terms and instructions to be set forth in the Commission of George Washington,

whom they had unanimously elected Commander-in-chief. The commission, as there determined, appointed him "to be General and Commander-in-chief of the army of the United Colonies, and of all the forces now raised, or to be raised by them, and of all others who shall voluntarily offer their service, and join the said army *for the Defence of American Liberty, and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof.*"

American Liberty was the subject matter of the contest, and the fact was emphasized by the use of the word "thereof" following the words "hostile invasion." The military forces were to repel the invasion, not primarily of *America*, but of *American liberty*.

On the same day they passed a resolution somewhat amplifying the language in reference to American liberty, extending it from the term,—"for the defence of American liberty,"—to the term,—"for the *maintenance and preservation* of American liberty."

What did the Continental Congress mean by *American liberty*?

The records of that body furnish the authoritative answer.

As later in the case of the Convention which framed the constitution, it was intended that the proceedings of the Continental Congress be kept secret; but during the administration of President John Adams, Congress authorized a publication of 400 copies of the "Journals of Congress," *i. e.*, of the Continental Congress.

The record in the first volume is very meager as to many desirable particulars; yet at times it is extended to the fullest details. It shows that the Congress began its work on Monday, September 5th, 1774, in Philadelphia, where "a number of the delegates, chosen and appointed by the several colonies and provinces in North America, . . . assembled at the Carpenters Hall."

It gives the names of the delegates then present,—

names which will remain immortal while American independence survives.

The only business recorded for the first day was the choice of a President, Peyton Randolph, of Virginia, and Secretary, Charles Thompson, and the production, reading, and approval of the credentials of the delegates. Meager as is the day's record in other respects, these credentials are set forth *in full*; and they tell, better than any set speeches would do, *why* and for what ends these delegates were there.

The New Hampshire delegates were authorized "to attend and assist in the General Congress of delegates from the other colonies, . . . to devise, consult, and adopt such measures as may have the most likely tendency to extricate the colonies from their present difficulties; to *secure* and *perpetuate* their rights, liberties, and privileges, and to restore that peace, harmony, and mutual confidence which once happily subsisted between the parent country and her colonies."

The Massachusetts credential was somewhat longer; but the delegates were to aid in "the recovery and establishment of their just rights and liberties, . . . and the restoration of union and harmony between Great Britain and her colonies, most ardently desired by all good men."

The object of Rhode Island was likewise "to establish the rights and liberties of the colonies, upon a just and solid foundation."

Without going through the entire list, it may be noted that Maryland's object was tersely stated,—"to effect one general plan of conduct, operating on the commercial connection of the colonies with the mother country, for the relief of Boston, and *preservation of American liberty*."

The North Carolina delegation did not appear until

September 14th. Their credential indicates and approves of the ground and purposes of the Congress:

. . . “*Resolved, That we approve of the proposal of a general Congress . . . to take such measures as they may deem prudent to effect the purpose of describing with certainty the rights of Americans, repairing the breach made in those rights, and for guarding them for the future from any such violation done under the sanction of public authority.”

It is to be noted that the purpose was to begin by “describing with certainty the rights of Americans.” The “rights” included their *liberty*.

The Congress promptly proceeded to carry out this program. In fact, its proceedings to this end had begun on the very day after the formal opening session. The record of September 6th shows that, immediately after establishing rules of procedure and providing for secrecy, it was resolved that two committees be appointed; the first, “to state the rights of the colonies in general, the several instances in which those rights are violated or infringed, and the means most proper to be pursued for obtaining a restoration of them.”

The second committee were “to examine and report the several statutes, which affect the trades and manufactures of the colonies.”

These committees were duly appointed, and went to work to perform their respective duties. Obviously nothing of importance could be done until they reported to the Congress, which met from day to day and adjourned to await the expected reports. The Journal shows but little aside from further credentials from newly arrived delegates until Saturday, September 17th. Under that date the record says: “The Resolutions entered into by the delegates from the several towns and districts in the County of Suffolk, in the province of the

* Vol. I, p. 13.

Massachusetts bay . . . were laid before the Congress, and are as follows:"

The Resolutions there set forth in full are the so-called "Suffolk Resolves." The record shows that they had been "unanimously voted" in Milton on September 9th, eight days before they were presented to the Congress.

Thus the investigation of American Liberty led directly to the fact that the very first document discussing that subject which appears in the "Journals of the Continental Congress" went there from *Milton*.

The chaotic conditions now prevailing throughout the world (our own country included) have brought conviction that a present-day realization of the truths of our own fundamental history is an essential of our present and future well-being and security. So, in order to awaken, if possible, at least a local interest in a renewed study of our foundations, it seems worth while to review once more, for the Milton Historical Society, something of the relation which the Suffolk Resolves bore to the struggle which resulted in our independence. This relation has been well known and forgotten many times during the five generations which have passed since the Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia in 1774; but it is hoped that it may add to the interest of such review to show, as above, that recent events have given renewed importance to the history of our evolution from Colonialism to self-government.

There had been an unsuccessful attempt to hold a meeting of Suffolk delegates in Stoughton in April, 1774. Such a meeting was finally held in Dedham on the following September 6th, when Dr. Joseph Warren was appointed chairman of a committee to draw suitable resolutions and present them at an adjourned meeting to be held in Milton on September 9th. The adjourned meeting was held in Milton on that date, and the Suffolk Resolves were there presented, discussed, and

adopted. As stated in a footnote in Ford's edition of the "Journals of the Continental Congress" (Vol. 1, p. 39), "they were sent express to Congress by Paul Revere, who reached Philadelphia on Friday, September 16th, and delivered them to the Massachusetts delegates." Turning to the Diary of John Adams (Vol. 2, p. 380), under date of September 17, 1774, we find the following:

"17. Saturday. This was one of the happiest days of my life. In Congress we had generous, noble sentiments, and manly eloquence. This day convinced me that America will support [the] Massachusetts or perish with her!"

This is accompanied by a footnote saying:

"On this day the celebrated resolutions of Suffolk County in Massachusetts had been laid before Congress, and resolutions were adopted by the Congress expressive of sympathy and support. See the *Journals*."

Resorting to the Journals we find that, on the same day, the Congress ordered that the resolutions of the Congress, "together with the resolutions of the County of Suffolk, be published in the newspapers."

It is to be borne in mind that while the "Journals of the Congress" are now open to the world, they were then "secret." Going back to the footnote in John Adams's Diary (Vol. 2, p. 380), we find a quotation from a letter by John Adams to his wife dated the day after the introduction and action upon the Suffolk Resolves, to wit:

"The proceedings of the Congress are all a profound secret as yet, except two votes passed yesterday and ordered to be printed. *You will see them from every quarter.* These votes were passed in full Congress with *perfect unanimity*."

(The italics are the present writer's.)

Thus we see that what the Milton meeting of the Suffolk delegates adopted and sent express by Paul Revere

to the Congress in Philadelphia received the approval of every member of the Continental Congress, including the representative men from not only widely separated but also widely differing colonies and communities; men not only likely to differ, but who did actually differ with one another on some of the most vital points involved in the controversy. It surely was most helpful to the progress of the great cause then on trial between Great Britain and her American Colonies that the first important paper presented to the Congress was one which met with instant support and unanimity. It is worth remembering that George Washington and Patrick Henry and both of the South Carolina Rutledges, John and Edward, and Samuel Chase and John Jay and Roger Sherman and Silas Deane all concurred with John and Samuel Adams in approving the Suffolk Resolves and commanding the course of action there laid down, and in putting aside, for the moment, the rule of secrecy which had been adopted, in making these Resolves public and publishing them in detail, broadcast, with the seal of the unanimous approval of the entire Congress. Here is conclusive evidence of the *importance* as estimated by the entire membership of the Congress of this initial stroke emanating from Milton.

A similar estimate of importance coming contemporaneously from the other side of the Atlantic is shown in the brief though admirable article on the Suffolk Resolves in Teele's "History of Milton" (p. 429), where the following appears as a quotation from the British press of the day:

"The friends of America have the satisfaction to learn that the Resolves of the late Continental Congress respecting the votes of the County of Suffolk published in the English papers here not only surprised, but confounded the ministry, as by it they perceive the Union of the Colonies to be complete, and their present menaces only mark their despair."

These Resolves have been examined and analyzed in history. One interesting treatment of them appears in Pitkin's "History of the United States" (Vol. 1, pp. 279-280). John Fiske, in his work on the "American Revolution" (Vol. 1, pp. 127-128), gives an epitome of them and notes that they were enthusiastically indorsed by the Congress. Alden Bradford quotes them in full in his "History of Massachusetts" from 1764 to July, 1775, p. 339.

The Suffolk Resolves were followed by other notable documents issued by the Continental Congress, including the Statement of Violations of Rights, Address to the People of Great Britain, Memorial to the Inhabitants of Quebec, Petition to the King, and Declaration on Taking Arms. Not alone in America did these papers create a tremendous impression. Lord Chatham praised them so highly in the House of Lords that his praise has been noted by writers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Washington Irving in his "Life of George Washington" says (Vol. 1, pp. 404-405) :

"The papers issued by it [the Continental Congress] have deservedly been pronounced masterpieces of practical talent and political wisdom. Chatham, when speaking on the subject in the House of Lords, could not restrain his enthusiasm. 'When your lordships,' said he, 'look at the papers transmitted to us from America; when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own. For myself, I must declare and avow that, in the master states of the world, I know not the people, or senate, who, in such a complication of difficult circumstances, can stand in preference to the delegates of America assembled in General Congress at Philadelphia.' "

Almost the same language may be found in Knight's "History of England" (Vol. 6, p. 343), where the quota-

tion from Lord Chatham's speech closes with the words, "I trust it is obvious to your lordships that all attempts to impose servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental nation, must be vain, must be fatal."

This conclusion was reached from Lord Chatham's high estimate of the state papers emanating from the Continental Congress.

It has already been noted that the first of these papers was the Suffolk Resolves, upon which the Congress had set the stamp of their unanimous approval. It seems worth while to see if these Resolves bore any appreciable relation to the later papers.

We have also seen that between the opening of the Congress and the presentation there of the Suffolk Resolves, the Congress was awaiting, from day to day, the reports of the two important committees upon which the Congress would, presumably, base its course of action. The "Journals of Congress" show neither the work in committee nor the speeches in the Congress. For information as to these resort must be had to such outside sources as exist.

The most fruitful of these sources, apparently, are the "Life and Works of John Adams" and the "Correspondence" between John Adams and his wife.

In Vol. II of Adams's "Life and Works" we find several pages of Notes of the Debates of the Congress on September 8, 1774 (pp. 370-373). Here he shows that Colonel Lee of Virginia was claiming that our "rights were built on a fourfold foundation; on nature, on the British constitution, on charters, and on immemorial usage." Mr. John Rutledge agreed that our claims were founded on the British constitution, but denied they were founded on the laws of nature. Other delegates also differed materially from Colonel Lee as to the proper basis of our rights and claims.

Following the extracts from the Adams diary is an "Extract from the Autobiography" [of John Adams] (see Vol. II of "Life and Works," p. 373). It seems that this statement was written from memory in 1804.

Speaking of the work in these committees, he says (p. 373) :

"It would be endless to attempt even an abridgment of the discussions in this committee, which met regularly every morning for many days successively, till it became an object of jealousy to all the other members of Congress. . . . The two points which labored the most were :
1. Whether we should recur to the law of nature, as well as to the British constitution, and our American charters and grants. . . . I was very strenuous for retaining and insisting on it, as a resource to which we might be driven by Parliament much sooner than we were aware.
2. The other great question was, what authority we should concede to Parliament; whether we should deny the authority of Parliament in all cases, etc. . . . These discussions spun into great length, and nothing was decided. . . .

"After a multitude of motions had been made, discussed, negatived, it seemed as if we should never agree upon anything. Mr. John Rutledge of South Carolina, . . . addressing himself to me, was pleased to say, 'Adams, we must agree upon something; you appear to be as familiar with the subject as any of us; and I like your expressions,—"*the necessity of the case,*" and "*excluding all ideas of taxation, external and internal;*" I have a great opinion of that same idea of the necessity of the case, and I am determined against all taxation for revenue. Come, take the pen and see if you can't produce something that will unite us.'

"Some others of the committee seconding Mr. Rutledge, I took a sheet of paper and drew up an article. When it was read, I believe not one of the committee was fully

satisfied with it; but they all soon acknowledged that there was no hope of hitting on anything in which we could all agree with more satisfaction.

"All these five agreed to this, *and upon this depended the union of the Colonies.*"

Thus we find that there was no natural unanimity between the delegates to the Congress. The differences had to be thrashed out. Ideals could not always be made practicable, but sometimes had to be pared down or abandoned to meet the necessity of the case. The matters were first considered in subcommittee, then in full committee, and finally the Statement of Violation of Rights is set forth in the Journals under date of October 14, 1774 (Ford's ed., pp. 63-73). Two drafts appear in parallel columns; the first being "Sullivan's Draught"; the second containing the 4th Resolution as prepared by John Adams, the difficulties contained in which were shown above.

It is interesting to compare the language of the fundamental points in the Suffolk Resolves and in the statement issued by the Congress:

Suffolk Resolves

"3. That the late acts of the British parliament . . . are gross infractions of those rights to which we are justly entitled by [1] the *laws of nature*, [2] the *British constitution*, and [3] the *charter of the province.*"

Statement of Violation of Rights

"That the inhabitants of the English Colonies in North America, by the immutable *laws of nature*, the principles of the *English constitution*, and the several *charters or compacts*, have the following right."

"Journals of Congress,"
Ford's ed., Vol. 1, p. 67.

Having shown the practical identity of the fundamentals in these two documents, it remains that the Suffolk

Resolves set the mark for what was thrashed out a few weeks later in the Continental Congress.

An examination of these state papers will give some insight into why they were so effective.

The records show that they were prepared and considered with great care. The opening sentence in the Suffolk Resolves shows that they were "several times read, and put *paragraph by paragraph*," before being "unanimously voted." (Journals, p. 32.)

These Resolves, like the succeeding papers, show the "decency, firmness, and wisdom" which Lord Chatham recognized as the basis of his high praise. He obviously uses the term "decency" in its etymological sense of "being fit, suitable, or becoming." Accordingly all these papers undertook to show the true relation of the parties to each other and to the subject matter. And this they did with the "firmness and wisdom" which he also noted. This "fitness" of treatment was not accidental. The guiding spirits in this movement were not only men of character, but men of education. If anybody will take the trouble to read what John Adams disclosed as to his own self-education, self-training immediately following his graduation from Harvard College, he will begin to realize why Adams accomplished so much in his early manhood and why his services were so much sought after. Likewise Thomas Jefferson, notwithstanding his youthfulness, had lived a life largely filled with experiences and, through reading, study, and contact with men, had mentally acquired a vast storehouse of experiences of a kind to fit him to cope with the important questions of that time. Indeed, generally speaking, the men who went to Philadelphia were exceptionally well fitted for their tasks.

While they were men of marked individuality, and therefore strong in their differences, we have seen that they were, nevertheless, capable of what we now-a-days call "team play." Moreover the results showed that, by

utilizing, in team play, these very differences, a better result was produced than would have been attained if the sole efforts of any one man, even the best among them, had been adopted and followed. This is demonstrated in the Ford edition of the "Journals of the Continental Congress" by a comparison of the facsimile drafts of some of these state papers showing the various alterations and elisions, as well as the individual work of some of the draftsmen. For example: Washington left Philadelphia on June 21, 1775, to take command of the American army at Cambridge. Two days later the Congress adopted a Resolution appointing a committee of five "to draw up a declaration, to be published by General Washington, upon his arrival at the Camp before Boston."

The members of this committee were John Rutledge, William Livingston, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and Thomas Johnson. The next day (Saturday, June 24th) the committee reported a declaration "which was read and debated, and referred for further consideration till Monday next." On the Monday (June 26th) the matter was recommitted, and John Dickinson and Thomas Jefferson were added to the committee.

From that date to July 6th the official record is silent in regard to this matter, which does not re-appear upon the record till Thursday, July 6th, when the declaration was brought into the Congress by the committee, was read, was "taken into consideration, and being debated by paragraphs, was approved."

Now it is to be noted that this declaration, begun on June 23d, was intended by the resolution to be published by General Washington "upon his *arrival* at the camp before Boston." The committee, as originally constituted, obviously saw that speed was necessary, and reported a declaration the next day. If that draft had been satisfactory and had been immediately adopted, Washington could easily have been overtaken by an express

rider before his arrival in camp, which was not until July 2d. But the declaration was not finally reported to and adopted by the Congress until July 6th, four days after Washington's arrival at the appointed destination.

What had caused this delay?

The Journal records give no clue; but the valuable footnotes and the various drafts in the Ford edition, written from his gleanings in various collateral contemporaneous resources, furnish the explanation.

In Vol. II of Ford's edition of the "Journals of the Continental Congress," pp. 128 to 140, we find in parallel columns two drafts entitled "Jefferson's Drafts," and two copious footnotes on page 128 furnish the explanation. These notes condense the information so fittingly that the temptation is strong to repeat them both here in full.

However, the limitations of time and space will be observed to the extent of cutting down the reproductions here to Note 2, the shorter of the two notes:

2. "These two papers ['Jefferson's Drafts'] are found in the Jefferson Manuscripts in the Library of Congress. The second, or later, draft contains some suggested changes in the writing of John Dickinson, and bears on the last page the following memorandum by Jefferson:

"'1775, June 23. Congress appointed a committee to prepare a Declaration to be published by General Washington on his arrival at the camp before Boston, to wit, J. Rutledge, W. Livingston, Dr. Franklin, Mr. Jay, and Mr. Johnson.

"'June 24, a draught was reported.

"'June 26, being disliked, it was recommitted and Dr. Dickinson and T. Jefferson added to the committee, the latter being desired by the commee to draw up a new one, he prepared this paper. On a meeting of the commee J. Dickinson objected that it was too harsh, wanted softening, etc., whereupon the commee desired him to

retouch it, which he did in the form which they reported July 6, which was adopted by Congress.'

"Although the Jefferson drafts were never actually laid before Congress, they are essential to a proper understanding of the Declaration as finally accepted."

As stated, the two Jefferson drafts extend from page 128 to page 140.

Beginning on page 140, the two remaining drafts appear in parallel columns. The left-hand column is headed "John Dickinson's Draft," the right one—"Final Form."

It is the last of these four drafts, the one marked "Final Form," which went forth to the world as the *Declaration on taking arms*. I have read all these state papers again and again, and to me this document is the finest, strongest of the entire number, surpassing even the Declaration of Independence.

These four drafts furnish to the student a wonderful opportunity to see the workings of individual minds, and of one mind on another; thus showing the advantage of team work. This does not mean that such work can best be done by large numbers of people. That would be impracticable, as was well known long before Lord Chatham's time. Lord Bacon in his essay "Of Dispatch" says: "There be three parts of business: the preparation, the debate or examination, and the perfection. Whereof, if you look for dispatch, let the middle only be the work of many, and the first and last of few." That was the course pursued, with such excellent results, in these famous papers.

Those who, alone or with others, will study these papers will, I think, find the hoped-for benefit of studying these "genetic records" in preference to the predigested pabulum served up by the historians.

In the final draft of the "Declaration on taking arms," reference was made to the results of the French Colonial war; and the document went on to say:

"Towards the conclusion of that war, it pleased our sovereign to make a change in his counsels. . . . The new ministry finding the brave foes of Britain, though frequently defeated, yet still contending, took up the unfortunate idea of granting them a hasty peace, *and of then subduing her faithful friends.*

"These devoted colonies were judged to be in such a state, as *to present victories without bloodshed, and all the easy emoluments of statuteable plunder.*"

Whether from the pen of Lloyd George or Clemenceau or Woodrow Wilson, can you find any utterance in the recent world-war more skillfully and effectively constructed than that just quoted? Yet apparently,—though Rutledge (who had been described by Patrick Henry as the most eloquent member of the Continental Congress) and Benjamin Franklin and John Jay and Jefferson himself had all tried their hands,—it was left to John Dickinson, of comparatively inferior fame, to carve out this wonderfully condensed and vivid statement of the origin of the trouble between Great Britain and her colonies,—a statement which was accepted by the committee and approved and made public by the entire Congress.

The more detailed statement (on pp. 145-146) of the grievances suffered is made with beautiful simplicity and directness. So also is the statement of the efforts made to obtain redress and satisfaction. Finally (on p. 153), the situation then presented is reached, saying:

"We are reduced to the alternation of choosing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers, or resistance by force. *The latter is our choice.* . . . Honor, justice, and humanity, forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors, and which *our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us.* We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of *resigning succeeding generations* to that wretchedness which inevitably awaits them, if we barely entail hereditary bondage upon them."

Let us come down to the end:

"In our own native land in defence of the freedom that is our birth-right—and which we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it—for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our fore-fathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, *and not before.*" (p. 156.)

So said John Dickinson and Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin and John Rutledge and John Jay in committee, and the rest of the delegates in open Congress, on the 6th day of July, 1775, to an admiring world of which Lord Chatham became the spokesman.

Had not the Suffolk delegates sent to them from Milton, in the Suffolk Resolves, full inspiration for this great aftermath?

Bear carefully in mind the words just quoted from the "Declaration on taking arms" while you hear or read these words which went forth from Milton:

"Whereas the power, but not the justice, the vengeance but not the wisdom of Great Britain, which of old persecuted, scourged and exiled our fugitive parents from their native shore, now pursues us, their guiltless children, with unrelenting severity. And whereas, this, then savage and uncultivated desert, was purchased by the toil and treasure, or acquired by the blood and valor of those our venerable progenitors; to us they bequeathed the dear-bought inheritance, to our care and protection they consigned it, and the most sacred obligations are upon us to transmit the glorious purchase, unfettered by power, unclogged with shackles, to our innocent and beloved offspring."

So much from the preamble.

The first resolution acknowledged the rightful sovereignty of the King.

The second was:

"That it is an indispensable duty which we owe to God, our country, ourselves and posterity, by all lawful ways and means in our power to maintain, defend and preserve those civil and religious rights and liberties, for which many of our fathers fought, bled and died, and to hand them down entire to future generations."

Is it to be wondered at that, in Adams's letter above referred to, he says:

"The esteem, the affection, the admiration for the people of Boston and the Massachusetts, which were expressed yesterday, and the fixed determination that they should be supported, were enough to melt a heart of stone. I saw the tears gush into the eyes of the old grave, pacific Quakers of Pennsylvania"?

The third resolution described broadly the infractions of their rights.

The fourth, comprising only three lines, was the bravest, the greatest, the most inspiring of all, and was surpassed by nothing in the course of the entire revolutionary period save only the final act of separation itself by the Declaration of Independence.

Behold this fourth resolution in its simplicity:

4. "That no obedience is due from this province to either or any part of the acts above mentioned, but that they be rejected as the attempts of a wicked administration to enslave America."

We may drop down now to the twelfth resolution:

12. "That during the present hostile appearances on the part of Great Britain, notwithstanding the many insults and oppressions which we most sensibly resent, yet, nevertheless, from our affection to his majesty, which we have at all times evidenced, *we are determined to act merely on the defensive*, so long as such conduct may be vindicated by reason and the principle of *self-preservation but no longer*."

As our last excerpt we take the eighteenth resolution:

18. "That whereas the universal uneasiness which prevails among all orders of men, arising from the wicked and oppressive measures of the present administration, may influence some unthinking persons to commit outrage upon private property; we would heartily recommend to all persons of this community, not to engage in any routs, riots, or licentious attacks upon the properties of any person whatsoever, as being *subversive of all order* and government; but, by a steady, manly, uniform and persevering opposition, to convince our enemies, that in a contest so important, in a cause so solemn, our conduct shall be such as to merit the approbation of the wise, and the admiration of the brave and the free of every age and of every country."

Thus history shows that the Suffolk Resolves,—framed in "words of decency, firmness, and wisdom,"—adopted in Milton and approved and published by the Congress in Philadelphia, furnished both inspiration and guidance in the maintenance and preservation of American liberty,—upon the firm foundation of *law and order*.

PART II

It may be admitted that one of the principal objects of this paper was to show that the Town of Milton was and is entitled to higher rank among the immortals of the Revolution than has been accorded to it. It will be noted that the only basis so far suggested for this claim is that the act of bringing forth these Resolves was performed here. While this basis would have supported such claim in much the same way that the signing of the Declaration of Independence has conferred lasting renown upon the city of Philadelphia, the mere contribution of the place of the act,—of what the lawyers call the *locus rei actæ*,—did not seem wholly satisfactory. The human touch was needed. What, if anything, had the *men* of Milton to do with it?

Then, too, there was another impediment to complete satisfaction. It is true that an ancient building in the Town bears upon its front a tablet stating,—“In this Mansion the Suffolk Resolves were adopted”; but it is well known locally that the truth of this statement is doubted by some of our citizens who should be deemed amongst those best qualified to decide upon the matter.

The desire to learn, if possible, as to the activities of the men of Milton leading up to the adoption of the Suffolk Resolves, and also to find out more about the disputed question as to the building where they were adopted, caused further investigation before attempting to complete this paper; and the results are set forth below.

We know of no record of what occurred at the meeting where the Suffolk Resolves were adopted aside from the Resolves themselves. In Ford’s edition of the “Journals of Congress” [Vol. 1, p. 37] the names are given of the members of a Committee there appointed to present cer-

tain remonstrances to Governor Gage. This list contains the names of two Milton men, Col. William Taylor and Dr. Samuel Gardiner, but no statement is made as to their activities.

The records of the Town of Milton, however, furnish important circumstantial evidence of the actual participation of the Town in the making of the Suffolk Resolves. The main evidence upon this point is the record of Town Meetings held June 27th, 1774, and July 25th, 1774.

At the June meeting it was

"Voted to choose a Committee of five persons to consider & determine upon some proper measures for this Town to come into respecting the situation of publick affairs, and that sd Committee be enjoined to set forthwith, and report as soon as may be."

Note the strength of the language in the duty placed upon the Committee:

"That sd Committee be enjoined to *set forthwith*, and report as soon as may be."

Our first inclination was to correct the spelling of the word "set" as constituting a small blemish upon the report. Further consideration and investigation show, however, that it is no blemish, but the use of a word of precision giving, and most tersely, both clearness and strength. For if the verb "set" is here an intransitive verb, it has as one of its meanings:

"To apply one's self; to undertake earnestly."

Thus by the simple monosyllable "set," the Committee were enjoined "to apply themselves, to undertake seriously 'forthwith.'"

After the appointment of the Committee the meeting was adjourned "to the 25th day of July next at four o'clock in the afternoon."

It seemed desirable to learn, if possible, where these meetings were held; and it is hoped that the following

evidence upon the point may prove of sufficient interest to warrant its insertion here.

It is to be borne in mind that these meetings were *Town Meetings*, while the Suffolk Resolves were adopted at a *Convention* of delegates from all the Cities and Towns of the County of Suffolk, which then comprised nineteen towns, including all of the present County of Norfolk. Wherever no place of meeting is stated in the record, the presumption, of course, would be that these Town Meetings were held in whatever was then the official place for holding such meetings.

On page 284 of Teele's "History of Milton" we find that:

"Town meetings were held in the *meeting house*, or, in suitable weather, *on the church green*, until A.D. 1836."

The question, therefore, becomes—Where was *the meeting house* at the time of each of these meetings?

Going back to page 277 (in the "History of Milton") we find the subdivision of Chapter X entitled "Meeting Houses." It is here shown (p. 277) that "*the first meeting house* in use, before the establishment of the town, seems to have stood on or near the 'Country Heighway' at the head of Churchill's Lane"; that the "*second meeting house*" was erected in 1671 on or near what is now Vose's Lane and Centre Street (p. 280); that the "*third meeting-house*" was built in 1728–1729. On page 282 of the History we find that "this third meeting-house, . . . was built near Canton Avenue, *in front of the present Unitarian Church*. Its size was fifty-feet by forty, and twenty-eight feet high with a belfry." . . .

This "*third meeting-house*" continued to be *the meeting-house* until replaced, upon the same plot of land, by the "*Fourth Meeting-House*," which was authorized in 1785 (p. 283) and dedicated January 1st, 1788. This "*fourth meeting-house*," with various changes and im-

provements, briefly described on page 284, is "the same edifice now occupied by the Unitarian Society." . . . (p. 284.)

It thus clearly appears that the Milton Town Meetings, held from the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765 until after the close of the Revolutionary War, were held in the "third meeting-house," or if the weather was suitable, on the church green, upon the plot of ground partly covered by the present church building of the First Parish of Milton.

Here, then, picture to yourselves the men of Milton gathered together on June 27th, 1774, to choose those of their number best qualified to consider and determine upon and report "some proper measures for *this Town* to come into respecting the situation of publick affairs."

Volumes of history have been written upon those "publick affairs." A very few points out of the great mass of material available will help us toward viewing the situation from the standpoint of your townsmen of that day.

The famous, or infamous, Stamp Act had been enacted in the spring of 1765. Of it a leading English historian* has written:

"A Stamp Act to raise sixty thousand pounds produced a war that cost a hundred millions."

Were he writing today he might add to the cost—and the loss of Colonies whose possessions less than a century and a half later were worth more than fifty thousand million pounds or two hundred and fifty thousand million dollars.

The Act was followed in Massachusetts by several notable communications upon the subject between Governor Bernard and the House of Representatives. In the fall of 1765 the stamped papers to be used under the Act arrived here; and the Governor sent to the Council

* Knight's "History of England," Vol. VI, p. 271.

and House of Representatives on September 25th a message saying:

"A ship is arrived in this harbor with stamped papers on board for the King's use in this province. . . .

"As Mr. Oliver has declined the office of distributor of stamped papers, and cannot safely meddle with what are arrived, the care of them devolved to this government. . . . I have already laid this matter before the Council, and they have referred it to the General Court. I therefore now apply to you, jointly, to desire your advice and assistance,"* etc.

The next day the two houses sent an answer to the Governor; an answer so brief and conclusive it may be given here entire:

"May it please your Excellency, The House having given all due attention to your Excellency's message of this day, beg leave to acquaint your Excellency, that as the stamped papers, mentioned in your message, are brought here without any directions to this government, it is the sense of the House that it may prove of ill consequence for them anyways to interest themselves in this matter. We hope, therefore, your Excellency will excuse us if we cannot see our way clear to give you any advice or assistance herein."*

As the position of the House of Representatives was thus non-committal, and as the Stamp Act was to go into effect on November first, a meeting of the citizens of Milton was held on October 24th, 1765. The record of that meeting (which Teele says was held "on the green about the church") shows that it voted to choose a Committee to draw up instructions to the Town's representative respecting the Stamp Act, and that Dr. Gardner was one of the three Committeemen chosen. The Committee drew up and presented instructions from which we quote as follows:

* Massachusetts State Papers, p. 49.

"Instructions by the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of Milton to Stephen Miller, Esq., their present Representative.

"Being sensibly affected by the calamitous circumstances to which this Country must soon be reduced by the execution of the Stamp Act, unless by some means relieved, we think proper in the present distressed conjunction of affairs to give you the following instructions.

"1st. That you promote and readily join in representing our grievances to the King and Parliament in a suitable manner, and if redress may easily be obtained it will be most acceptable to us—yet as the distress threatened must [if not prevented] bring Slavery and Ruin, we expect you to promote and join in measures which may relieve us, *be the expense and consequences what they will.*"

The Stamp Act was repealed; but other grievances continued and multiplied.

Eight years later, in January, 1773, the Town again held a meeting to instruct its representative. The meeting was held on January 4th and again appointed a similar Committee. The meeting was adjourned to January 8th, when the Committee presented a Report formulating instructions to Mr. Josiah How, Representative for the Town of Milton. Out of the numerous grievances then known, four were selected and clearly stated. The Representative was thereupon instructed as follows:

"We recommend and enjoin you to use your interest and influence in the House of Representatives as far as is consistent with the rights of the people to Petition his Majesty, and to remove the grievance we labor under. And in the meantime we depend upon your steadiness, prudence, and firmness, and that *you give not up one jot or tittle of our rights, but dispute every inch of ground with the enemies of our Liberties and Freedom.*"

The Town voted to accept this report as instructions to their Representative.

The Committee so reporting were John Adams (probably Deacon John Adams), Col. William Taylor, Dr. Samuel Gardner, Capt. David Rawson, and Daniel Vose.

We have thus shown the temper, firmness, and persistence of the Town from the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765 to 1773; and history shows no faltering until the end,—Independence,—was reached.

This, then, was the state of mind of the men of Milton when they met in June, 1774, to consider and act upon the ever increasing grievances which had reached a point demanding united action by all the Colonies in a Congress then appointed to meet in Philadelphia in the following September.

Did the men of Milton then wait to see what the Congress would advise or do?

Their action is the answer. Let us, then, turn to their Record.

We have seen that on June 27th, 1774, they appointed a Committee “to consider & determine upon some proper measures *for this Town to come into* respecting the *situation of publick affairs.*”

The scope of this Committee embraced the entire relation between Great Britain and the Colonies; yet the Town of Milton, disdaining the rôle of follower, resolved to be a *leader* in the determination of how the awful situation must be met.

The Committee were given a month, until July 25th, to further study conditions and formulate their Report.

Finally the Freemen and other Inhabitants of the Town of Milton met on July 25th, 1774, to receive and act upon the Committee’s Report.

The Town records have preserved the Report in full. It is found in the volume entitled “Milton Records, 1729-1775,” at page 334.

It begins with the statement of the precise purpose for which the Committee was appointed; yet the Committee,

—and rightly, we think,—prefaced its recommendations with a statement regarding the subject matter, saying:

“We the Inhabitants of Milton acknowledge George the third to be our rightful Monarch—we feelingly declare ourselves to be his true & loyal Subjects—and next to the Horrors of Slavery we detest the thought of being separated from our Parent State—we have been wont to glory in our connexion with our Mother Country —our Hearts have been ever warm with filial affection—and we are ready and willing on all proper Occasions to spend our Blood and Treasure in defence of his Majesties Crown & Dignity—and we are Equally ready and willing to spend our ALL in defending our own religious & civil Liberties when invaded by any humane Power.”

“But in defiance of the Laws of God and society—in direct Violation of Sacred Compact, the British Parliament have assumed a Power to alter and destroy, our free Constitution of Civil Government, and to introduce any Species of oppression whatever.”

Now follows the proposed action of the Town:

“And being clearly of opinion that to withstand such assumed Power, and to oppose in a regular way; the Oppressive Measures which are carrying into Execution by such Power, is a duty we owe to God, to ourselves, and to unborn Millions, We therefore RESOLVE that we will unite with our Brethren THE SONS OF FREEDOM IN AMERICA in any proper Measures, that may be adopted to defeat the late cruel & oppressive Acts of the British Parliament respecting America, and this Distressed Province in particular,—to extirpate the Idea of Tyranizing, which is so fondly fostered in the Bosoms of those in Power—and to secure to ourselves and to Posterity our invaluable Rights & Privileges.”

“A Non-Consumption Agreement we think the most rational as it is the most Peaceful, But as Committees from the several Colonies on this Continent are *soon* to

meet and 'to deliberate & determine upon some wise & proper Measures for the recovery & Establishment' of American Liberties—and as we doubt not but the WISDOM OF AMERICA will fix upon such righteous measures as will Eventually prove not only the Salvation of this Extensive Continent but also the Permanentest Dignity of Great Britain, we therefore RESOLVE to commit our cause under God, to them, and to adopt such Righteous Measures as shall be by them recommended to the Colonies as necessary to regain & secure our free Constitution of Government."

It should be observed that definite recommendations were omitted, apparently because the Committee knew of the coming Congress to be held in Philadelphia. Even so, the Committee placed on record here what it believed to be the most rational as well as the most peaceful measure to secure the desired result, saying: "A Non-Consumption Agreement we think the most rational as it is the most Peaceful."

This is substantially all that was actively done by the Continental Congress at its first session.

The conclusion, for the time being, reached by the Continental Congress before it adjourned October 26th, 1774, was as follows:

. . . "we have for the present, only resolved to pursue the following peaceable measures:

"1. To enter into a non-importation . . . association.

"2. To prepare an address to the people of Great Britain, and a memorial to the inhabitants of British America, and

"3. To prepare a loyal address to his Majesty, agreeably to Resolutions already entered into."*

The great deliberation and care are shown in the additional votes which were passed at the meeting.

* Pitkin's "History of United States of America," Vol. 1, p. 288, citing "Journals of Congress," Vol. 1, pp. 28, 29, and 30. See also Ford's edition of Journals, Vol. 1, p. 73.

"2d. Voted that said Report be read Paragraph by Paragraph and the accepting or not accepting each Paragraph to be put to Vote separate, accordingly sd. Report was read, and each and every Paragraph was accepted.

"3d. the question was put whether the Town do accept the whole of sd. Report and the Vote was in the Affirmative.

"4th. Voted that Capt. David Rawson, Col. William Taylor, Doctor Samuel Gardner, Amariah Blake, & Mr. Ralph Houghton be a Committee to Correspond with the Committees of Correspondence in the Towns through this Province, and thro' America, as occasion may require.

"5th. Voted that the Committee send a letter to the Committee of Correspondence for Boston, thanking them for their Publick spirit and noble Zeal for the weal of America.

"6th. Voted that the Town Clerk send an attested copy of the Transactions of this Town respecting Publick affairs, to the Committee of Correspondence for Boston.

"7. Voted that this meeting be adjourned to the first monday in October next at two of the clock afternoon."

These votes are worthy of special consideration. They are a material part of the circumstantial evidence showing the activity and influence of the Town of Milton in the making and issuing of the Suffolk Resolves. Obviously the Town recognized the indefiniteness, the lack of concrete determinations, so far as they could be ascertained from the subject matter of the report, as the Town was virtually silent upon all other active points save its recommendation as to a Non-Consumption Agreement. But obviously the Town did not intend to remain thus indefinite in pressing its contentions. After accepting each paragraph of the report and after accepting the whole of the report, the Town appointed another Committee,—this time "to correspond with the Committees

of Correspondence in the Towns through this Province, and thro' America, as occasion may require." Note particularly the sixth vote,—"that the Town Clerk send an attested copy of the Transactions of this Town respecting Publick affairs, to the Committee of Correspondence for Boston." This vote imposed a very considerable duty upon the Town Clerk. The vote was not merely to send an attested copy of the record of this particular meeting, but a copy of all of the transactions of this Town respecting public affairs.

The last vote was that the meeting be adjourned to the first Monday in October next.

But events moved faster than was anticipated on July 25th. The Town could not wait until October; so another Town Meeting was held on the 2d of September, 1774. The first vote passed at that meeting has so important a bearing upon the Town relation to the Suffolk Resolves that it is here quoted in full:

"1st. Voted that the present Committee of Correspondence, Viz. Capt. David Rawson, Col. William Taylor, Doctor Samuel Gardner, Amariah Blake, and Mr. Ralph Houghton be members to attend a County Convention to be held at Mr. Woodwards Innholder in Dedham on Tuesday the sixth day of this Instant at ten of the clock forenoon (or any other meeting of sd. Convention untill this Vote shall be disannulled by this Town) to deliberate & determine upon all such matters as the distressed circumstances of this Province may require."

In the first place the Town then definitely knew that what it calls the County Convention was intended to be held in Dedham, on September 6th. The Town intended to be represented there, and by its strongest men. Note that Capt. David Rawson again heads the list of its Committee; that the Committee again contains the names of Dr. Samuel Gardner and Mr. Ralph Houghton as well as that of Amariah Blake.

• And now, will you call to mind that Captain Rawson and Dr. Gardner had been members of all of the Committees as far back as the Committee of 1765 appointed in relation to the Stamp Act? Captain Rawson was one of the leading men of the Town, and in the year under consideration (1774) he represented Milton at the General Court. Teele says: "He was a prominent and important man during the eventful years of the Revolution. His name often appears as Moderator of those meetings when great principles were asserted and maintained."*

Dr. Gardner was a graduate of Harvard of the Class of 1746,—twenty-eight years before the date of the Convention.

In view of the gravity of the situation it is a safe conclusion that Captain Rawson and Dr. Gardner, at least, and perhaps others of the Milton delegates occupied a large part of the time between their appointment on September 2d and the final adoption of the Suffolk Resolves on September 9th in active work upon the making of the Suffolk Resolves. The Town of Milton, at meetings wherein these men were Committeemen, had made its record on many of the questions involved; and the Milton Town Clerk had been required to furnish information as to the Town's action upon public affairs. These delegates and particularly Dr. Gardner and Captain Rawson undoubtedly had a clear, accurate, working knowledge of the demands and requirements of Milton and the points of difficulty between Great Britain and the Colonies.

As Dr. Joseph Warren had obviously been selected for leadership in the Convention, it cannot be doubted that,—in the interim between the appointment of the Milton delegates and the presentation by Dr. Warren of his report at the adjourned meeting in Milton on September 9th,—he and Dr. Gardner were in frequent, if not in almost continuous, consultation and active coöperation upon the

* Teele's "History of Milton," p. 107.

subject matter of that report. It is to be borne in mind that, in addition to the points of mutual interest and helpfulness, both were doctors and both were graduates of Harvard. These ties in all time are of the strongest.

Moreover Dr. Gardner was an older graduate of Harvard than Dr. Warren, the former graduating in 1746 and the latter in 1759; and although Dr. Warren was the leader of the Convention, yet under the circumstances he must inevitably have consulted with Dr. Gardner in preparing the report, and must have been influenced largely by him especially because of his activity and experience in the matters involved from the very moment when the passage of the Stamp Act had become known in the Colonies. Moreover it should be noted here that Dr. Gardner and Colonel Taylor were appointed, at the Suffolk Convention, upon the Committee with Dr. Warren to interview Governor Gage.

The conclusion is inevitable, then, that the Suffolk Resolves were very materially affected by the spirited and inspiring *Milton* resolves and the action taken thereunder, and by the active work of the delegates from Milton. Bearing in mind what we have seen of the form and substance and timeliness of Milton's work, the inference is inevitable that the Suffolk Resolves were not only participated in by Milton, but were largely the result of the leadership of Milton.

There is one more historical fact which, perhaps, should be considered as having given to Milton and to the position of its representative men special prominence at that particular period.

The Milton Town Meeting leading up to the County Convention was begun on June 27, 1774. On the first day of that month Governor Hutchinson had taken his silent departure from the Colony, leaving his home on Milton Hill and going directly from there to his ship in Boston Harbor. John Adams said of him: "He had been

admired, revered, rewarded, and almost adored; and the idea was common that he was the greatest and best man in America.”*

Even after his reputation for loyalty was lost, his personality so affected some of his fellow townsmen that, when it became known that he was to leave the country, they addressed a friendly letter to him. This was more than their liberty-loving townsmen could endure; and at the time when the work of the Suffolk Convention was being done, the citizens of Milton were contemplating the discipline that, before the month of September was over, they had inflicted upon the writers of that letter. The disaffection of Governor Hutchinson, as well as his great prominence, obviously not only gave importance to the action of the Town of Milton, but made it incumbent upon its loyal inhabitants to make up, if possible, by their own flawless devotion and unflagging work, for whatever of loss of reputation had come to their Town through the disaffection of its most distinguished citizen.

All the foregoing circumstances concurred to impel Milton to active leadership in the Suffolk Convention, and will account for the fact that the adjournment on September 6th in Dedham was to Milton, so that the final work of the Convention should be performed in and emanate from the Town whose leadership in the cause had raised it to this distinction.

If you think it is going too far to speak thus of Milton’s leadership, read the words of Alden Bradford in his “History of Massachusetts” (p. 338) :

“The resolutions adopted by the meeting of committees at Milton, in the county of Suffolk, were more explicit and spirited, than any which had been before published. They discovered a sensibility more alive to the distresses of the people, and more indignant at the conduct of administration, than appeared in the proceedings of the other counties.”

* Teele, p. 419.

Here is the judgment by the collator of the Massachusetts State Papers and the author of the "History of Massachusetts from 1764 to July, 1775," confirming our claim as to Milton's leadership; nay, anticipating it by nearly a century.

This claim is made in the same spirit in which Bradford, in his "Introductory Remarks" to his collection of Massachusetts State Papers (p. 9), said as to Massachusetts:

"We mean not to claim for Massachusetts all the merit of opposition to the arbitrary measures of Great Britain, nor all the influence which was exerted to effect the revolution. Other colonies were forward and decisive in disapproving of the power claimed by the British ministry, of that period, over the people in these provinces; and readily united with Massachusetts in measures of redress."

He then gives credit to Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania, and closes this branch of the subject by saying:

"We believe, however, that the history of those times will abundantly shew, that the House of Representatives in Massachusetts was the most firm, systematic and persevering in its efforts for the repeal of these oppressive acts, in exciting a just sense of our rights and our dangers, and in rousing the spirit of the people generally to make a solemn, decisive stand, which involved the alternative of liberty or death."^{*}

In effect we are as nearly as possible in like manner trying to say as to Milton that "we believe, however, that the history of those times will abundantly shew," that, especially in the proceedings leading up to the first Continental Congress, while there was great activity along similar lines in a very large number of communities, the Town of Milton "was the most firm, systematic and persevering . . . in exciting a just sense of our rights

* Massachusetts State Papers, p. 9.

and our dangers, and in rousing the spirit of the people generally," as above stated by Bradford; and this was obviously the belief of Bradford, as shown by the above quotation from his "History of Massachusetts" (*) written four years after his collation of the Massachusetts State Papers.(†)

Yet more: Bradford adds the human touch for which this writer was seeking. Having judged the work, he turns to the *men* who did it, saying:

"It is deemed proper that the resolutions of the Suffolk Convention be here given, in justice to the patriotic feelings and high purposes of *men*, who stood forth, at every hazard, in support of civil liberty; and to whom with others, the present generation in America are wholly indebted for a most perfect condition of political and social freedom." (*Ibid.*, p. 339.)

Twice, at least, since these words were written has our political and social freedom been in imminent danger of shipwreck,—from the civil war; and from the recent world war. To us and to those who shall come after us, no stronger or better words can be addressed than those issued from the beautiful spot by the old church, when Milton enjoined its Representative, saying:

"We depend upon your steadiness, prudence and firmness, and that you give not up one jot or tittle of our rights, but dispute every inch of ground with the enemies of our Liberties and Freedom,"—to which we add only the words—whether these enemies be from without our borders, or within them.

* Published 1822.

† Published 1818.

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